

# SWEEPING INVESTIGATIONS TO FIX BLAME FOR FIRE

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOLOCAUST PUT UP TO CITY

State Commissioner of Labor Says His Authority Stopped with Notice to City Official.

## ONLY REPORTED PLACES WITHOUT ANY ESCAPES

Matter of Adequacy of Protection in Hands of Building Superintendent, Says Official.

[SPECIAL TO THE EVENING TELEGRAM.]

ALBANY, Monday.—The Commissioner of Labor, John Williams, explained to-day that, while his department notified the New York city authorities whenever their inspectors found no fire escapes where such escapes were needed, it was the custom of the department to assume, whenever a fire escape was found to exist, that such fire escape had been inspected by the local authorities and was adequate and properly constructed.

"I have no doubt," said Mr. Williams, "that there are hundreds of fire escapes in New York city which, if used by employees in case of fire, would lead them into a trap from which it would be difficult to escape. Our position in regard to fire escapes is this:—The decision of the Court of Appeals in the case of the city of New York versus Sallor Snug Harbor, decided in 1903, says:—

"We think it was the intention of the Legislature, by the enactment of the local and special law, to leave with the city of New York jurisdiction to the proper officers of that city over the subject of fire escapes upon factories therein."

### Without Authority.

"From this decision it is evident that our department is without authority to interfere in this matter. When, however, our inspectors find that there are no fire escapes at all, this being a matter of plain fact and prima facie violation of the law, we send to the Superintendent of Buildings of the proper borough a special blank, calling the Superintendent's attention to this lack for his consideration and such action as he may deem proper, with a request to advise us as to what they have done about it.

"When there is a fire escape, however, the question as to whether it is a proper one or not is entirely a matter of opinion, and inasmuch as the local authorities have entire jurisdiction on this matter we are compelled to assume that such fire escapes have been inspected by them and meet with their approval. We do not, therefore, notify the city authorities un-

## Heroic Young Forewoman Loses Her Life to Save Others from Death in Flames



FANNIE LANSNER.

Miss Fannie Lansner Guides Girls to Safety Until Her Own Escape Is Cut Off.

## THEN LEAPS FROM WINDOW TO DEATH ON PAVEMENT

Calm in Midst of Peril, She Does Her Utmost to Calm Panic-Stricken Women to the Last.

Survivors to-day tell of the heroism of many of the girls who, struggling with their more frantic and panic-stricken comrades, did all in their power to prevent disaster on the upper floor of the Asch building. None of the stories of those who sacrificed themselves for others is more pathetic than that of Miss Fannie Lansner, twenty-one years old, who lived at No. 78 Forsyth street.

Miss Lansner was the forewoman in the Triangle shirtwaist factory, and, according to the survivors, she did everything in her power to keep the girls together near the elevator shaft and wait for the return trip.

Speaking both Yiddish and English to the girls who were huddled about her, all crying and screaming, Miss Lansner guided some of them down the stairways and kept others waiting for the elevator.

### Refused to Escape.

Trip after trip of the elevator was made and Miss Lansner remained on the floor,



REBECCA KESSLER.



MORRIS BERNSTEIN.



PAULINE LEVINE.



TESSIE SARACINO.



SARA SARACINO.



ESTER GOLDSTEIN.



ROSE LIERNARK.



BENJAMIN MURIE.



CLOTILDE TERRANOVA.



ANNIE L'ABBATE.



TESSIE KAPLAN.



VIOLET SCHROCK.

and though several girls begged her to go with them down the elevator, Miss Lansner said she would be "all right," and told them to go out as quickly as possible.

According to Miss Ethel Monick, one of the girls guided through smoke and into

the elevator, by Miss Lansner, she came down in the last trip of the elevator.

"There was too much smoke for the man to go back and, of course, Miss Lansner could not get out. I then went out on the street and the most horrible sight I ever



BERTHA KÜHL.



SALLY WIENTRAUB.

saw met my eyes. Girls were jumping from the ninth and tenth floor windows. I turned my eyes away and ran. I only got a few feet away when I had to turn again and then I saw Miss Lansner's body come tumbling through the air. The sound was awful and I almost fainted. Then some one picked her up with others, but she was dead.

### "All Loved Her."

"We all loved Miss Lansner for she would not discharge us unless we broke some rule of the firm and even then it would have to be something very bad before she would do it. Many of the girls were kept with the firm because of Miss Lansner's kindness, who would go to the boss after a girl had been away for a couple of days and say something nice about her and she would come back.

"But with all that she was one of the strictest girls we ever knew, and one of the best workers. Of course I am glad I was saved, but I am awfully sorry for Miss Lansner and all of us feel the same."

## FIRE ALARMS, ESCAPES, DRILL, FOR FACTORIES

Assembly Committee To-day Reports Brooks Bill for Safety of Workers.

## HEAVY FINES FOR THOSE WHO VIOLATE THE LAW

Legislators Plan Drastic Action and Favor Centralization of Precautionary Power.

The Assembly Committee on Labor and Industry, at a special meeting at Albany this afternoon, reported Assemblyman Franklin Brooks' bill requiring every factory or mercantile establishment conducted in a building two or more stories high, in which fifty or more persons are employed, to be equipped with a fire alarm system.

The bill also provides for a monthly fire drill. The State Commissioner of Labor is given power to enforce the act, and a violation is made punishable by a fine of \$200 for each day the factory is not equipped with the fire apparatus and \$200 for each week the fire drill is not held.

The bill was introduced on February 12, but no action was taken until to-day, when it was unanimously reported as a result of Saturday's fire in New York city. Governor John A. Dix declared to-day that he hoped and expected that there would be the fullest kind of inquiry into the causes and responsibility for the Washington place fire. He says that he is content to leave it to the municipal and county authorities and that he has no intention of interfering, as he believes that the proper, careful investigation will be made.

### Governor Appalled.

"I am appalled by the terrible disaster," he said. "It is hard to believe that such a thing could happen in this day and age."

"The horrible disaster demands the most careful investigation by the city authorities, but I expect that they will place the full responsibility where it belongs. Very often carelessness on the part of employees is responsible in no small degree for horrors of this kind. Employees in many cases fail to familiarize themselves with the building in which they are employed, and sometimes don't even know where the stairways or exits are."

The comment of legislators who favor putting the supervision of all fire exits under the supervision of the Fire Department.

## GIRLS RISKED LIVES TO SAVE OTHERS IN PERIL

Annie Sprinsoek Drags Girl Chum Into Elevator After Car Had Started.

## MISS MILLER GOES BACK TO SAVE TWO FRIENDS

Result of Heroism, She Suffers Injuries That May Result in Her Death.

Thought lost in the Washington place disaster, Annie Sprinsoek, a seventeen-year-old girl, is at her home, No. 501 Pennsylvania avenue, Brownsville, still dazed by the horror of Saturday evening. Her purse was found in the ruins and it was thought that she had perished, but she was one of those fortunate enough to get out in one of the trips made by the heroic elevator boys. In spite of her fright at the moment one of her girl friends in the Triangle Waist Company owes her life to Miss Sprinsoek.

Miss Sprinsoek in part owes her life to the fact the dressing room on the eighth floor was so crowded that she was waiting outside when the fire started. Her hat, gloves and purse were on a bench beside her. She grabbed up the hat and gloves and ran to the elevator. When she tried to go back for her purse the press behind her was too great. She was among the last to be pushed on the crowded car. As it started down she saw her friend, Kittie Greenberg, left behind. The car had dropped about three feet, with the door open. Seizing her friend by the dress she pulled her into the car over the heads of the others and held her above her head until the first floor was reached.

Another act of heroism may cost one of the working girls her life. This is seventeen-year-old Annie Miller, of No. 154 Attorney street. She was one of the first of the girls to reach the street. Then she remembered two immigrant girls who had been sitting next to her on the eighth floor. She ran back into one of the cars and up to the workroom again. Somehow she got back into the room, found the girls, and was able to lead them to safety, how, she does not know. As they reached the elevator Miss Miller was knocked down and trampled upon. The injuries she received this way, and her burns, make the surgeons at St. Vincent's Hospital despair of her life.

The real hero of the fire, in a way, was Joseph Zitto, the elevator boy, who lives at No. 129 Macdougall street. He does not know how many trips he made up to the furnace of the three upper floors. "You don't suppose that I was marking every trip down with a pencil?" he demanded, when he was asked how many trips he

## \$7,000 IN RELIEF FUND FOR VICTIMS OF FIRE

## Say Doors Were Locked Where Fire Killed 141

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Chief Croker recommends these amendments to the building code:—